



State of Rhode Island

Department of State | Office of the Secretary of State

Gregg M. Amore, Secretary of State

March 5, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair
House Committee on Finance

RE: Department of State FY2026 Supplemental, FY2027, and Capital Budgets

Dear Chair Abney,

The Department of State serves Rhode Islanders by promoting transparent government, supporting businesses, and strengthening our democracy through a commitment to civic engagement, secure elections, and empowering voters. I write in support of the proposed Department of State's FY2026 Supplemental, FY2027, and Capital budgets, as well as additional requests to ensure our team can achieve this mission.

As I presented to this Committee in February, the Department of State is in strong support of Article 6 – Question 6, which provides \$45 million in General Obligation bond funding to build the Rhode Island State History Center. The State History Center will have the State's treasures on display and will serve as a hub for history education and civic engagement. An extensive study, funded by the Rhode Island Capital Plan (RICAP) funds appropriated by this Committee, confirmed an ideal site and significantly revised the proposal to reduce the size of the building and the project cost. But, the most essential public functions of the program are included – an exhibit gallery to permanently display Rhode Island's founding documents, as well as space for rotating exhibits, and a multi-purpose room that will host a variety of events, functions, and educational programming. As Rhode Island commemorates the semiquincentennial, the State can invest in the State History Center as a legacy project to honor Rhode Island's role in promoting the ideals of freedom, equality, and independence throughout our history and today. I once again ask for your support of the Rhode Island State History Center.

In FY2027, the Elections Division will administer the statewide primary and general elections. Resources provided in the proposed budget will support ballot printing; postage for mail ballots; printing and mailing costs for the Voter Information Handbook; physical security upgrades to our Elections Division office space; advertising dollars to conduct a robust voter outreach effort; and conducting a training program for local elections officials and Boards of Canvassers. The Department enters the 2026 elections after completing a comprehensive voter list maintenance mailing, which was supported by an FY2026 budget appropriation. All 741,830 active registered voters were sent a mailing that listed the information we have for them on file in the Central Voter Registration System. It provided voters with instructions to change their address, update their contact information or party affiliation, and add their driver's license or State ID number. As part of this mailing, 50,000 letters were returned as undeliverable, and the Elections Division changed the registration status of these voters to inactive. The statewide mailing bolstered our existing processes to keep our voter list accurate and our elections fair.

The Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) is one of the lesser-known programs managed by the Department of State, but, for the families that utilize it, it is incredibly impactful. The ACP enables victims of domestic violence, abuse, stalking, sexual assault, or human trafficking to keep their personal information safe from their abuser. We operate a mail forwarding service, where survivors can use a Department of State PO Box as a substitute address, and we ensure that we do not release their actual addresses in public information, like the voter registration file. ACP provides additional protection to survivors while

leaving an abusive relationship. It also allows them to re-establish their daily lives and remain connected to the support they need while retaining their privacy. The Program was established by the General Assembly in 2022 – by legislation I was proud to sponsor in the House – and it was implemented on January 1, 2023. The ACP currently serves 130 survivors, including 51 children – and while it continues to grow, the Program does not have its own dedicated staff. A full-time staff person would enable the Department to expand its outreach to partners in law enforcement, healthcare, schools, community-based organizations, and the Courts, and to provide more comprehensive services to program participants. We ask for your support in adding an FTE, which was not included in the Governor’s proposed budget, to support the Address Confidentiality Program.

Once again, in our capital budget request, the Department of State proposed \$800,000 in RICAP funds to update its *OpenGov* application and website, which includes the Gov Directory, the Open Meetings Portal, and the Boards & Commissions database, which was not included in the Governor’s proposal. Legislation passed in 2023 provided that “the Secretary of State Department shall maintain an up-to-date online directory of government officials” (RI General Laws 22-3-12). This project will enable the Department’s Public Information Division to comply with this requirement and increase the accuracy and transparency of information for members of the public. It is also essential to meeting my goals of encouraging civic engagement by providing an accurate, user-friendly tool for Rhode Islanders to learn about and engage with their government. I encourage the House Committee on Finance to consider this request and fund the update to the *OpenGov* application with RICAP funds or General Revenue.

I appreciate the support of the House Committee on Finance on this budget to ensure the Department of State can accomplish its mission. If you have any questions about the Governor’s budget proposals or these supplemental requests, please feel free to contact Michelle Arias, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, at marias@sos.ri.gov. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Gregg M. Amore
Secretary of State

cc: Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance